

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ILO ELAB MU

SUBJECT: ILO ACTIVITIES IN OMAN

REF: STATE 003255

1. OMAN IS NOT YET A MEMBER OF ILO. ACCORDING TO UNDP RESREP ALAIN MORVAN, OMAN MAY JOIN THIS YEAR OR IN 1978.

2. OBJECTIVES: LARGELY DUE TO SHORTAGE OF UNDP FUNDS AND OMANGOV INHIBITIONS, ILO PROJECTS IN OMAN HAVE BEEN FEW. IN 1975 A \$95,000 PROJECT FOR A COOPERATIVE CENTER WAS PROPOSED BY ILO, BUT PROJECT NEVER MATERIALIZED. MAIN DIFFICULTY WAS DIVIDED OMANGOV RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN MINISTRIES OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS/LABOR AND AGRICULTURE. ILO ASSISTANCE HAS ALSO BEEN INVOLVED IN PROVISION OF SHORT-TERM ADVISERS TO MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS/LABOR AT A 5-YEAR UNDP COST OF \$90,000 AND COUNTERPART CONTRIBUTION OF \$18,000. FOR THE PROJECT IN 1976/77, ILO EXPERTS ON ONE-TWO MONTH TDY HAVE CONTRIBUTED USEFUL REPORTS ON SUCH AREAS AS VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY AND FORMULATION OF A REVISED LABOR LAW. THE OMANIS HAVE PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ILO ADVICE ON LABOR REGULATIONS WHICH TIGHTEN CONTROLS ON IMMIGRANT INDIAN AND PAKISTANI LABOR. VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN OMAN IS QUITE WEAK, AND ILO HAS TRIED TO STRENGTHEN TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE. ILO HAS ALSO MADE INFORMAL SUGGESTIONS ON ORGANIZATION OF DIRECTORATE OF LABOR.

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3. TRIPARTISM: THERE IS NO ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT IN OAMAN. THE ILO AND UNDP HAVE WORKED DIRECTLY WITH OMANGOV, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO PARTICIPATION BY EMPLOYER OR WORKER ASSOCIATIONS.

4. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: ILO HAS SENT TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL (USUALLY NOT ARABIC SPEAKING) TO OMAN TO MAKE REPORTS,

AND ILO FOLLOW-UP HAS BEEN GOOD. PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN MODEST, HOWEVER, AND COULD NOT BE EXPANDED BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF UNDP FUNDS. OMANGOV COUNTERPARTS SOMETIMES WORKED AT CROSS PURPOSES AND SOUGHT QUICK RESULTS BEYOND SCOPE OF ILO PROJECTS. TIGHT OMAN BUDGET SITUATION IN LAST FEW YEARS PRECLUDED EXTENSIVE OMANI SUPPORT.

5. IMPLEMENTATION: VOCATIONAL TRAINING REPORT HAS NOT ACHIEVED MANY RESULTS THUS FAR, ALTHOUGH UNDP RESREP IS HOPEFUL THAT TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE WILL BE STRENGTHENED BY A CURRICULUM MORE APPROPRIATE TO OMANI NEEDS. LABOR REGULATIONS, WHICH ARE LARGELY IMPLEMENTED BY ROYAL OMAN POLICE, ARE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE BUT ILO SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOMED.

6. OVERALL, THE OMANGOV HAS FOUND ILO PROJECTS PERFORMED THROUGH UNDP TO BE OF SOME USE IN POLICY-MAKING, LESS SO FOR PRACTICAL CONCRETE PROJECTS. IF OMAN DOES JOIN ILO, WE ASSUME AD HOC ADVISORY REPORTS WILL INCREASE AND A FEW SMALL CONCRETE PROJECTS MAY BE INITIATED.
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